

# FATALITY



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, III CORPS AND FORT HOOD  
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AFZF-SAFE

05 SEP 06

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Fatality – Fatality Memo 06 -15

1. A III Corps Soldier died as a result of a recent ATV accident. The 23 year old Soldier lost control of his speeding ATV which then went into a roadside drainage ditch and flipped several times. The Soldier was thrown from the vehicle striking rocks, trees, and debris on the ground. He was airlifted to a regional trauma center where he died from massive head injuries. The Soldier was on a 4-day Pass from his unit visiting his parent's home at the time of the accident. Although the Soldier wore most of the required personal protective equipment, he was not wearing a helmet, and he also was alone at the time of the crash.
2. Within III Corps, we have seen 4 Soldiers die as a result of ATV accidents in the past 20-months. Army-wide 8 ATV deaths have been recorded during this same period. The common contributing factors leading to the death or injury of these Soldiers are failure to follow safe-driving principles, selective non-use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), improper/inadequate ATV operator training, complacency, lack of leader involvement in ensuring standards, and the management and mitigation of risk by both the Soldier and leaders.
3. Leaders and individuals should not consider all off-duty activities low risk, especially the use of recreational vehicles. Unlike motorcycle operators, no specific training is required for ATV operators. However, all major ATV manufacturers provide training programs and safety videos for the operator at no cost, which may have been helpful in this particular case as lack of training and inexperience may have been contributing factors in this accident. Personnel operating an ATV must review and adhere to safe operating procedures addressed in the vehicle owner's manual. Both training and complying with the warnings in the owner's manual are essential to ATV accident prevention. Each Soldier must take responsibility for his/her off-duty vehicle utilization procedures to include: obtaining qualified training; licensing where required; the wearing of mandatory PPE; and passenger safety.
4. Commanders must be innovative and committed to making a difference in protecting their Soldiers. Soldiers are required to wear proper protective clothing and head gear when operating not only motorcycles, but all-terrain vehicles as well. Failure to execute and enforce safe recreational vehicle handling procedures and training standards is not acceptable. We must continue to mentor our Soldiers to ensure the right risk decisions are made to avoid senseless accidents as described above.

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RAYMOND T. ODIERNO  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Commanding

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